

BIRDS VS. STREET CARS.

BY MARION E. SPARKS.

The advance of the interurban electric lines, makes excursions to country places more easy, but are the birds near it undisturbed by the shrill whistle? Of course the birds may become used to it, for they pay little attention to railroad trains; but the frequency of the cars may make a difference.

The following notes give the birds seen without careful search, in a space of two lots; along the south edge is a cutting and beyond that a garden equal to a city block in size. During the time the notes were taken, interurban, local and construction cars passed to and fro in the cutting from 4 a. m. till 12 p. m. daily, at intervals of from thirty to three minutes.

The birds were only passing and the ones that remained all summer were noticeably more numerous than they had been in previous years.

Lack of close watching, no doubt missed many. Absence of cats, dogs, chickens, and children may account for the number in part, while the presence of a small stream in the space beyond the garden probably had some influence.

The yard is almost crowded with shrubs, while a dozen shade trees, and twice as many fruit trees helped to make it easy for the birds to escape too close notice.

Time, April 5—May 13, 1904.

April 5, 1904.—Ruby-crowned Kinglet, on a vine at the open window, later in a bush; fearless, almost tame, i.e. allowed observer to approach nearer than ten feet.

April 6-13.—A few, 3 or 4 Chickadees, one White-breasted Nuthatch, Hairy Woodpecker, Flicker, Robin, Wood Thrush, Bluebird, White-throated Sparrow, Veery, Towhee (male only), Brown Thrasher, Brown Creeper, Junco, Bronzed Grackle, Blue Jay.

Cooler April 14-17.

April 17.—The first House Wren of the season; two weeks later than last year.

April 25.—Black and White Warbler seen; only one specimen. The Blackbirds have not been seen since April 20. No

Towhees here since the 22d of April. Robins are plenty now, and two pairs of Brown Thrashers are nest-building.

The Wood Thrushes are fewer in number; the flocks of White-throated Sparrows are gone, too. The Veery (?) and Song Sparrow are often heard.

Cold and rainy, but the Cardinal came to-day, and the first Oven-bird. Male Cardinal was very busy in a brush-heap, feeding the female, who disdained even looking for food for herself. The Cardinals do not notice the interurban car, even when it whistles not twenty feet from them.

April 27.—The earliest Catbird came; the Bluebirds are here again, tame as ever. They were very curious about a bonfire, hardly waiting for the flames to die down before investigating it. The Indigo Bunting was here, taking a drink from a pan of water about thirty feet from the kitchen door.

The Black and White Warbler came again; he "fished up" an angleworm somewhere and was seen pounding it vigorously on a small branch, before he finally ate it. Did he pull it out of the ground as Robins do?

April 30.—Male and female Rusty Blackbird appeared; later they made a nest in a pear tree about ten feet from the house.

May 2.—Hummingbird in the tulip bed.

May 5.—Oven-birds still here, but the flock, or number, is smaller. The Ruby-crowned Kinglet is here yet; flocks of White-throated Sparrows are here morning and evening. A Sora (Carolina Rail), was in the yard this morning. It seemed confused, and attempts to get a closer view resulted in driving it away. Wilson Warbler here to-day.

May 6, 6:00 p. m.—Saw and heard the Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

May 8.—The Least Flycatcher was observed in an apple-tree; shy, and very busy. The Wrens are nest-making. A female Towhee was here; the others earlier, March 9–April 22, were all males, and have been gone more than ten days; they were fearless, but this one is very shy.

The Wood Thrushes are gone, so are the White-throated Sparrows. A Warbler, the Cerulean, almost surely, was here to-day; shy.

May 9.—The Chestnut-sided Warbler; not shy; not ten feet away from the observer and the open house door.

May 11.—Canadian Warbler flashed into sight in the lower boughs of a soft maple, for a few minutes, just long enough to make sure of his identity.

May 13.—The Chimney Swifts are here; and another different warbler, Magnolia? Probably not.

May 18.—Male and female Redstart in the peach tree, "for this day only."

The Baltimore Oriole heard once or twice; was not seen till June; so that he can hardly be counted.

The first Towhees came March 9; Blue Jays are here all winter; Robins too, but not in large numbers. About March 20, the Golden-crowned Kinglet was seen, and a flock of Lark Sparrows, Downy Woodpecker, and Sapsucker. The Robins are on record in my notes as carrying nest material, March 31.

Of those in the first list the following had nests in the yard, or the garden beyond it:

Robin.	Bronzed Grackle.
Blue Jay.	Hummingbird.
Flicker.	Rose-breasted Grosbeak (apparently).
Brown Thrasher.	Baltimore Oriole.
House Wren.	Chimney Swift.
Oven-bird.	
Catbird.	

The last in a chimney of the house, where they had nested for more than ten years.

As for the numbers of the various sorts the largest numbers seen at any one time were:

Robin, 10 or 12.	Bluebird, 4.
Blue Jay, 10 or 12.	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 1.
Brown Creeper, 2 or 3.	Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 2.
Wilson Thrush, 5 or 6.	Chickadee, 4 or 5.
Downy Woodpecker, 2.	Brown Thrasher, 4.
Towhee (male), 30.	House Wren, 4.
Towhee (female), 1.	White-throated Sparrow, 20.
Flicker, 4.	Black and White Warbler, 1.
Lark Sparrow, 15.	Cardinal, 4.
Golden-crowned Kinglet, 1.	Oven-bird, 10 to 16.
Bronzed Grackle, 7 or 10.	Catbird, 6.
Wood Thrush, 10 or 12.	Indigo Bunting, 1.
Hairy Woodpecker, 2.	Rusty Blackbird, 2.

Sora, 1.	Least Flycatcher, 1.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird, 1.	Wilson Warbler, 1.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak (all males), 6.	Chestnut-sided Warbler, 1.
Baltimore Oriole, 1.	Canadian Warbler, 1.
Chimney Swift, 4.	Cerulean Warbler, 1.
American Redstart, 2.	Magnolia, 1.

Total, at least 160, probably 175 individuals.

For the same period of time, and place, the previous year, 1903, when no cars ran up the cutting at all, the birds noticed were :

Blue Jay.	Towhee.
Robin.	House Wren.
Bronzed Grackle.	Chipping Sparrow.
Brown Thrasher.	Baltimore Oriole.
Wood Thrush.	Junco.
Golden-crowned Kinglet.	Lark Sparrow.
Cardinal.	Wilson Thrush (?).
Rose-breasted Grosbeak.	Chimney Swift.

A total of 16, as compared with 37 in 1904.

As a check on this, the birds seen in a piece of woodland a mile away from the car track, July 13, 5 to 10 a. m., may be of interest.

Indigo Bunting, 1.	Chipping Sparrow, 4.
Field Sparrow, 3.	Meadowlark, 3.
Barn Swallow, 10.	American Goldfinch, 5.
Phœbe, 4.	Kingbird, 10.
Song Sparrow, 2.	American Crow, 7.
Migrant Shrike, 1.	Blue Jay, 7.
Bluebirds (some young ones), 12.	Robin, 10.
Yellow-billed Cuckoo, 1.	Bronzed Grackle, 20.

Total, 100.

Urbana, Ill.